21: Belshaw E-5 (1951) 1951 OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
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823 for advice. The tragedy is that subsequent events were unpredictable. When
[731] the blast came it was so swift that there could only have been two or three minutes' warning, and the phenomenon was so far beyond experience or imagination that the people were too numbed to panic. Good order was maintained and the refugees successfully assembled in camps in a remarkably short while. Within two days camps were operating and supplied by air.

823 As the people settled and began to take stock of events, they began to seek for
731 explanations. An aeroplane had been flying close to the mountain at the time of the blast, escaping in the nick of time. One rumour had it that this aeroplane had
[784] dropped a bomb. Most explanations were, however, religious in nature. Some people said that this was God's visitation because they had disobeyed the Bishop's instructions to build new churches. Others said that God had punished them because they had not helped the Allies sufficiently during the war and because some of them had betrayed missionaries to the Japanese. By April most of these specific rumours
[783] had been countered. There remained, nevertheless, an almost universal belief that God had punished the people for their sins, and these sins were enumerated in general terms, such as lack of co-operation in Mission and Government plans for development. This sense of guilt is a most important factor in resettlement attitudes.

731 Another factor affecting resettlement attitudes was the speed, scale and nature of the relief measures. The war-time miracle—the rapid mobilization of resources—was repeated by the European, not for purposes of destruction but for the help of the Papuan people themselves. Once again the people asked themselves how the European was able to do this; and they were grateful that their need had been met.

Relief was not only provided in the form of rations and building sites where the people erected humpies for temporary shelter. Medical services in the camps were directed not so much towards the healing of the wounded, for few of these had survived, so much as towards the maintenance and improvement of general health. The Higaturu Hospital was completely destroyed, but excellent field dispensaries were set up at Oro Bay, Popondetta and Ilimo. At Ilimo there was also a baby welfare clinic, staffed by two European nurses and Papuan assistants. In a few weeks the Ilimo dispensary and clinic had established itself as a popular institution, serving the needs of surrounding villages as well as of the camp. The large numbers treated bore ample testimony to the scale of medical need in the district and the regularity of out-patient attendance was notable.

[873] The Government maintained a technical training school at Higaturu, and the Anglican Mission had an advanced school at Sangara. Both of these were destroyed with almost complete loss of staff and pupils, many of whom were almost ready for graduation. Immediate relief measures could do little to replace this critical loss. But the Mission, with Government assistance, recommenced village-level schools in the camps. At Ilimo particularly the Government started adult education classes, partly to provide something useful for the people in their leisure hours, but mainly

796 The same pattern is found in the dancing which occurs nightly
177 before a major feast is held or before certain initiatory rites (like
the kere) are concluded. These are now referred to as "practises,"
[535] even though they are undoubtedly ritual acts in their own right. It
is also significant that the Orokaiva seasonal rites have been fitted
in as part of the Christmas and Easter observances, apparently as an
exotic appanedage, but in fact as a means of preserving traditional
religious obligations, even though in a changed form.

659 The same service of two masters is sometimes seen in the secular
sphere. People built lavatories, on official instructions, long before
[514] they dared to use them (for fear of sorcery). At Kendata, an hour's
754 walk from Sivepe, I saw a village with new houses, built on the govern-
[361] ment's instructions, but I was told nobody lived there except when
there was a visit from the patrol officer. There are many such villages
in the Managalasi district. Here, government instructions are being
complied with but customary patterns have persisted. In Sivepe, not
very much show needed to be put on for the patrol officer. The place
was cleaned before he arrived, of course, but not significantly more
so than happened every week.

123 It is true that certain things were concealed from me in Sivepe,
but these fell largely into some simple and reasonable categories:
secrets known only to initiated men, secrets known only to members
of a family or of the Seho clan. It was not a practise of the people
to pretend to adhere to a custom they had abandoned or to pretend to
881 have abandoned what they were still practising. In the early days of
our stay, this did happen; it took some months before we discovered
that girls were secluded upon their first menstruation and then ceremoni-
ally exhibited. We were told this custom no longer existed. But then,
we had referred to the custom with reference to what Williams said
about it; and in that form, perhaps, it was not or no longer practised
[841] in Sivepe. Later, I was told that if the ceremony was not performed
girls could not control their menses; there would be no way of stemming
[783] the flow of blood and everything would be polluted. Thus, the ritual
has persisted. Whether full-grown girls, completely naked, are carried
through villages at the present time I very much doubt (viz Williams,
1930: 207). I was told that these customs lasted until the second
534 world war and then were abandoned. But I found the word "abandoned"
782 always a dangerous one; the calling down of spirits with bullroarers
178 in preparation for a feast (viz. Williams) was also, according to
Sivepe informants, an "abandoned" custom; yet it happened in both
Inonda and Urarituru (a mile from Sasembata mission station) in 1967.
It was true that it had not been done in Sivepe for some time--not
since the middle fifties--and that there was no immediate intention
of doing it again. On the other hand, Sivepe knew the use of bull-
roarers as a means of calling down spirits which would then be
present at a feast and give this feast magical potency. For the time
being, Sivepe people evidently feel that this procedure is unnecessary
for the achievement of their immediate ends but it is still part of the
store of available possibilities should a need appear to arise.

26: Schwimmer E-5 (1966-1970) 1974
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the dead person. At ordinary harvest feasts and bride-wealth payments they are seen on display platforms along with taro and other vegetables. They are then subsidiary to taro and pigs, which are the main food gifts, but at mortuary feasts vast quantities are given, saved from the dead man's palms, which are made taboo until this feast. Dry coconut and areca are strewn on graves by affines of the deceased.

The distinctive features perceived by Orokaiva in each species should also be summarized. Coconut is believed to be a valuable adjunct to the diet of children and dogs (also chickens). In Orokaiva myths, its miraculous effect on children and dogs is often described. To the scientific observer this effect is natural enough as coconut is an important source of first-class protein for both children and dogs, who otherwise do not get much first-class protein. Coconut oil is used as a cosmetic for hair and body not only to enhance beauty but also for its magical efficacy, for the purification of man-slayers (Williams, 1930: 175, 207), and for women who are being initiated or who welcome visitors at dances. In all such cases it is the task of a male to pour the coconut milk over the persons whose magical protection is intended.

Areca, a mildly hallucinogenic fruit, is chewed by women as much as by men. When friends are sitting together, it is shared in much the same way as beer among white Australians. People offer nuts to each other but expect to come out approximately even. Visitors from other villages expect to be offered areca by their hosts. Its main physiological effect is to create a dreamy amiability and to break down hostility that might otherwise exist. Its magical uses, mostly in association with some medicine of more specific purpose, are too many to enumerate. A girl carries a bunch of areca at the ceremony which ends her seclusion after first menstruation. She normally offers it to her man at lovers' meetings.

Although I have a number of coconut and areca myths on record, I shall discuss here only one, the fullest one, which illustrates my argument most clearly. A beautiful girl, noted for her remarkable breasts, had the misfortune of killing all the young men with whom she slept. Her breasts pricked and killed them.